Maryland Numismatist

Germany's African Colonies

Map courtesy Wikimedia

Annual Meeting
FRIDAY Nov. 7 at 2 PM Whitman Expo
Ballot and Exhibit Application Enclosed

Autumn, 2025 Volume 53 – No. 3

The Maryland State Numismatic Association, Inc.

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AMERICAN NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION

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President's Message

If you have not noticed, MSNA has begun to have an active presence on social media. Every week we post to our social media pages, usually on Monday, on Instagram (@MSNAonline), Facebook (Maryland State Numismatic Association) and Threads (@MSNAonline). The posts usually highlight an item from the MSNA John B. Henry collection of Colonial notes, Civil War scrip and Civil War tokens. Posting is handled by our intern (and MSNA junior member) Bruni, who has also been working hard to add content to our website, www.msnaonline.org. On the site you can view all the different MSNA souvenir cards, elongated coins, medals, and wooden nickels, and even buy them! Visit the sites, like the posts and follow us!

On August 13, I gave the presentation "Brewery Tokens from the Civil War and Beyond" at the Catonsville Coin Club. It's the second time I've spoken to that MSNA-member club, having previously given the presentation on Colonial Maryland currency "From Loyal Colony to Independent State." If your club would like to hear either of those presentations, or another one, let us know at msnaonline.org@gmail.com.

Next year is the semiquincentennial of the United States. In commemoration of that, I will be presenting the "From Loyal Colony to Independent State" talk at Saints Row Brewing in Gaithersburg on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 as part of the Gaithersburg Community Museum's Museum on Tap series. Details will be posted on the social media accounts, so come out, have a beer, and hear a numismatic talk related to our nation's 250th anniversary.

Recall that MSNA will have its annual exhibit competition at the Whitman Baltimore Show from March 5-7, 2026. There are prizes for winning exhibits, and every exhibitor receives something just for exhibiting. Start planning an exhibit, or if you are not so inclined, be sure to stop by and see what others are showing. Our long-time relationship with Whitman allows us to do this, and we are thankful for our excellent connection with this fine show.

Happy collecting,

Ken Swab

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OFFICIAL RED BOOK CONTRIBUTOR

Germany's Short-Lived Colonial Empire

Part One: Germany's African Colonies

by Gerald Grzenda

[*Editor's Note: This article is based on Gerald Grzenda's exhibit that won third place in the MSNA exhibit competition at the Whitman Spring Expo. Photos are in the public domain unless stated otherwise.*]

A little over a century ago, most of Europe was deeply engaged in World War I. While this conflict was fought mainly in Europe, fighting also took place in Africa and Asia in some of the colonies of Imperial Germany—a country that was one of the Central Powers, all of whom were ultimately defeated in 1918. After the War, Germany was forced to give up all of her colonies, handing them over to the victorious French and British. This article describes a type collection of German colonial coinage which is mostly complete, along with some other numismatic items which relate to Germany's former colonies.

Otto von Bismarck 1875

Emperor Wilhelm II 1902

Germany came late to the colonization game. Other major powers had been conquering overseas territories since the 1500s, but there was no Germany to extend influence abroad until 1871, and the Kingdom of Prussia, the strongest German state, was engaged in European affairs. The first two leaders of the German Empire were First Minister Otto von Bismarck and Kaiser Wilhelm (Emperor William) II. Both were Prussian. Wilhelm II became both Kaiser and King of Prussia in 1888. German colonization efforts did not begin in earnest until 1884. Bismarck opposed expansion overseas, famously saying that "my …Africa is here…in Europe," but he finally bent to popular demand.

By the eve of World War One, Germany possessed a substantial colonial empire made up of territories in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific (see map of Africa on this journal's cover; the territories in beige were German). Its combined area exceeded a million square miles with a population of about 15 million. Most of Germany's colonial holdings were in Africa: Togo, Cameroon, German Southwest Africa, and German East Africa. Germany's defeat in World War I cost it its colonial possessions. The Kaiser's "little war in the east" spread throughout Europe and into his colonies, lasting over four years. What follows is a description by each colony of its history and coinage.

German East Africa

Left: The DOA flag with lion and palm tree, courtesy Wikimedia. Right: The German coat of arms, courtesy Wikimedia.

The largest colony was German East Africa (GEA), nearly the size of France and located about halfway up Africa's east coast (now Tanzania), facing the Indian Ocean. It was here that German colonization in Africa began with the German East African Company, known in German as the *Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (DOAG).

A central figure in the establishment of the DOAG was Dr. Karl Peters. Peters and another African explorer, Count Joachim Pfeil, were dissatisfied with the existing colonization organizations within Germany, and so the two men formed the DOAG. Lacking the financial resources to obtain African land and rights via purchases, they instead employed an underhanded method of obtaining treaties from the local chieftains. Peters and Pfeil found the headmen more amenable to giving away land and rights while intoxicated, and so an abundance of spirits was sure to be present during treaty negotiations. With enough of these so-called treaties in hand, Peters was able to obtain a charter for the DOAG from a reluctant Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1884.

The Company's problems began almost immediately. Although granted sovereign rights in the east African lands taken over by Peters and Pfeil, the Company had far too little power to enforce those rights, and too little

capital to finance infrastructure that could project such power. Added to these problems was the inexperience, and at times, cruelty of the colonial administrators, particularly Peters. The result was a continual loss of capital, and frequent native uprisings, the first of which occurred in 1888.

1 pesa KM1 1891 Cu 6.2g

1 rupie KM2 1890 Ag 11.66g

¼ rupie KM3 1890 Ag 2.92g

½ rupie KM4 1891 Ag 5.83g

2 rupien KM5 1893 Ag 23.32g

Of all the colonies, German East Africa (GEA) had the most varied coinage. The first coins issued were produced to the Indian standard, where 64 pesa equaled 1 rupie. A GEA rupie was worth 1.5 marks, despite the fact that a mark had .1606 Troy ounces of silver (ASW), so 1.5 marks was .2409, and the rupie had .344 ASW, the same as the British Indian rupee.

The pesa, equal in size to the Indian pice or ¼ anna, carries on its reverse a palm wreath which encircles the Arabic inscription "German Partnership year N", where N = 1307-9AH for 1890-2CE. The obverse of the coin displays an Imperial German coat of arms, a date, and the inscription DEUTSCH-OSTAFRIKANISCHE GESELLSCHAFT (German East Africa Company). The coat of arms has an Imperial crown suspended

above an eagle that is wearing the collar of the Order of the Black Eagle. On the eagle's breast is a shield bearing the Hohenzollern arms. The other coins carry on their obverse a bust of Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Latin inscription GUILELMUS II IMPERATOR (William II Emperor). The Kaiser is wearing a cavalryman's uniform and helmet.

On the reverse of these four coins is a circle which encloses a shield which contains the coat of arms of the German East Africa Company, with the company's name wrapped around the shield. Within the shield itself is a lion and a palm tree. A date appears at the bottom of the shield, and the denomination lies just below it. All the silver coins are .917 fine, like the British Indian coinage, and all coins were minted in Berlin.

The unchecked native uprisings had caused considerable damage to the plantations in the colony, causing the German government to annex the region in 1890 as the protectorate of German East Africa, and sending an Imperial commissioner there accompanied by German troops, ships and money to restore order. Over time, the Imperial Commissioner's Office gradually took over from the DOAG all of the Company's responsibilities for governing the colony. The DOAG, however, was left as a privileged economic entity within GEA.

½ heller KM6 Bz 2.5g

1 heller KM7 Bz 4g

¼ rupie KM8 Ag 2.92g

½ rupie KM9 Ag 5.83g

1 rupie KM10 1890 Ag 11.66g

5 heller KM13 CuNi 3.125g

10 heller KM12 CuNi 6.37g

5 heller KM11 Bz 20g

In 1904, the GEA replaced the old coinage system with a decimal one: 100 heller to a rupie. The three smallest new denominations that appeared were ½, 1, and 5 heller. Each of them display on their obverse an Imperial crown, and the inscription DEUTSCH OSTAFRIKA (German East Africa) partially encircling it. A date appears below the crown. On the reverse of these issues is a laurel wreath and a denomination within it. The large, bronze 5 heller was only introduced in 1908, along with a copper-nickel 10 heller. In 1913, GEA replaced the large 5 heller with a smaller copper-nickel coin. Both the new 5 and 10 hellers have a center hole which allowed them to be kept on a string, and distinguishes them from the silver higher denomination coins. These are the only GEA coins that were made this way. The silver ¼, ½, and 1 rupie kept the same obverse but changed the reverse to just the denomination inside a laurel wreath, with the colony name at top. These coins contain a mintmark, either A for Berlin or J for Hamburg.

There were sporadic native revolts after the colony came under German government administration, and all of them were put down through the heavy use of armed force. The last significant native uprising in GEA was the Maji-Maji Rebellion, which lasted from 1905 to 1906. After the revolt ended, German rule mellowed, and turned its attention toward activities more likely to promote the prosperity and well-being of its inhabitants, black and white. The Germans built roads and railways, launched ships on Lake Tanganyika, promoted mining, and introduced new crops and modern agricultural methods. They also extirpated the slave trade, diminishing banditry, and eliminated the Arab trade monopolies. The GEA encouraged free enterprise and built hospitals and dispensaries. Under GEA Governor Heinrich Schnee, an excellent start was made toward providing European-style education. All this was accomplished at considerable cost to Germany; so much so that many Germans thought the money could be more profitably be used on some domestic ventures.

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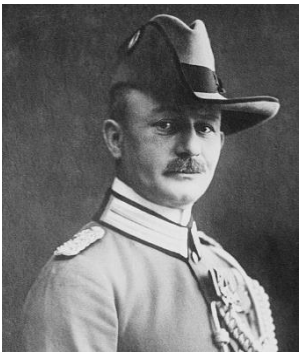
However, the Kaiser was in favor of expanding and developing Germany's colonial empire, and German East Africa had, besides its scenic beauty, the potential for becoming one of the most productive parts of Africa.

The outbreak of World War I in August 1914 brought rapid changes to German East Africa. Soon after the war began, the British imposed an effective blockade which forced the area to become politically and economically independent. Governor Schnee tried desperately, but in vain, to maintain the colony as a neutral area under the provisions of the General Act of the Berlin Conference (1885).

A highly effective commander for the small colonial defense force, Lieutenant Colonel Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, had arrived in January, 1914. Von Lettow was an experienced Imperial campaigner. He had served in the German contingent that suppressed the Boxer Rebellion in China, and later took part in the pacification of German Southwest Africa. Unlike Schnee, von Lettow had no illusions that the British would allow Germany's colonies to retain their cover of neutrality. During the eight months he was in GEA before the War, he assessed the colony's military assets while making an extensive tour of the country. It was also during this time that he saw to it that the askaris (black troops), who made up the bulk his force, received better training and weapons.



von Lettow

Askari with German flag

Elevated to a general's rank soon after the outbreak of the war, von Lettow proved to be a military genius and a master of guerrilla warfare. From the war's onset, he understood that the troops he had were too few to a win a great, decisive victory over the enemy forces that would be pitted against him. He set out instead to engage as many Allied troops as possible, thereby preventing them from fighting German forces in Europe, where the outcome of the war would be decided.

After the war began, von Lettow busied himself with border raids in Rhodesia while preparing for an invasion that he knew would come from British East Africa (now Kenya and Uganda) in the north. In September of 1914, nearly eight thousand British and colonial troops invaded German East Africa. On November 4, these troops were defeated at the Battle of Tanga by von Lettow. The defeated enemy was ejected from German East Africa, leaving behind large quantities of arms and other important supplies which the Germans found greatly useful. With these supplies in hand, von Lettow led his troops into British East Africa, where they managed to seize some strategically important areas.

In July 1915, German Southwest Africa fell to South African troops, thereby making it possible for many of these British colonial soldiers to be transferred to the east. In February 1916, a massive invasion of German East Africa from the north was launched by British and colonial troops under the command of South African General J.C. Smuts. This offensive was coordinated with a Belgian invasion from the west and an independent British one from Nyasaland in the south. In September 1916, Dar Es Salaam and Tabora--both strategically important areas in German East Africa--fell to the invaders. Undaunted by these setbacks, however, von Lettow continued the fight.

With a British-imposed blockade of Germany in place, no more coins or currency could be shipped out from there to her colonies. This barrier, and the GEA's determination to fight the allied armies who had invaded it, caused the colonial government of GEA to turn to its own resources to produce these much-needed items. In 1915, all of the colony's administrative offices that had been located in Dar Es Salaam—an important city and commercial port on GEA's coast—were moved to Tabora, which then became the wartime, provisional capital of the colony. This strategically important town, located deep within the colony's interior, had a railway repair shop into which there was brought various equipment which transformed this building into an emergency mint. Some of these machines were modified so they could be used as coining presses. One such piece of equipment was a hydraulic pipe-bending machine, while another was a palm oil press. A machine that was put into service was originally designed to roll raw rubber, but at Tabora it was used to press sheets of metal into uniform thickness. Blanks were then punched out of those sheets which were then struck into coins by using dies that were engraved by a native goldsmith. These emergency issues were struck from metal which was available within the colony. Shell casings were gathered

up by the German East Africa *Schutztruppe* and then melted down to provide the brass from which many of the 5 and 20 heller coins were made. The 15 rupien, the only gold coin ever to be issued by the colony, was struck from raw gold found in GEA mines. It was 18K gold with an actual gold weight of .1728 oz. The denomination may seem strange, but it is equal to an Indian mohur, although almost exactly half the gold content of similar coins minted by the British in India until 1891, and just under three-quarters of the gold content of the British Indian 1918 15 rupees coin (which was equal to a British gold sovereign).

5 heller KM14 brass 4g

15 rupien KM16 gold 7.168g

20 heller KM15 bronze & KM15a brass 11.5g

The 5 and 20 heller pieces have similar designs. On their obverse is a German crown sitting above the date, flanked by rosettes, with the initials DOA (*Deutsch Ostafrika*) located just below the date. On the reverse of these two coins is a palm wreath surrounding the denomination.

The 15 rupien was more carefully detailed than the other coins struck at Tabora. On the obverse of the piece is a crowned, Imperial eagle similar to the one on the 1 pesa coins of 1890-92. Below the eagle is a date flanked by two 4-leafed rosettes. An inscription bends around the upper part of the eagle that reads DEUTSCH OSTAFRIKA. The denomination of the coin appears below the eagle. On the reverse of the 15 rupien is an indigenous, wildlife scene only carried by this coin. In the foreground is a large, bellowing elephant with its trunk raised--a display meant to warn all that the animal is ready for combat. Behind the elephant is the towering image of Mount Kilimanjaro, near the site of much fighting between von Lettow's troops and the invading enemy forces.

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The coins produced at Tabora were all crudely made due to the circumstances of their manufacture. All of the dies that were used for striking them were engraved by hand, resulting in a number of small design differences. In September 1916, as Belgian troops were about to capture Tabora, its German defenders destroyed the emergency mint which they had operated there. After leaving the area, the Germans did not establish another emergency mint.

On November 28, 1917, von Lettow's principal fighting force of 5,000 troops was surprised and captured by South African troops. That same month, however, von Lettow, with his remaining force, began to move southwest across Portuguese East Africa (Germany had declared war on Portugal in March 1916) and, after crossing back into German East Africa in September 1918, he turned southwestwards to invade Northern Rhodesia in October. Having taken Kasama on November 9 (two days before the German armistice in Europe) he and his remaining force of 1,300 men finally surrendered on November 25.

Von Lettow had fought a brilliant campaign in East Africa. With a force that never exceeded 17,000 (with most of them being askaris) he kept 300,000 enemy troops occupied during most of the war at great financial cost to his enemies. He inflicted about 15,000 battlefield casualties. Casualties among Allied troops and their transport followers caused by various diseases (malaria, dysentery, etc.) incurred during their pursuit of von Lettow totaled even more.

Defeated in war, Germany was forced to relinquish her overseas possessions to the victorious Allies. German East Africa was divided up between Belgium and Great Britain, with Belgium receiving the northwestern section of German East Africa. This Belgian colonial territory later became the countries known today as Rwanda and Burundi. The rest of GEA became a British protectorate and was renamed Tanganyika. Today, the country is known as Tanzania.

German Southwest Africa

German Southwest Africa, known in German as *Deutsch-Sudwestafrika*, was located in southern Africa on the Atlantic coast (now Namibia). It was the second-largest colony of Imperial Germany, being half again as large as the German Empire in Europe. The beginning of this colony dates back to November 16, 1882, when Adolph Luderitz, a merchant from Bremen, asked Chancellor von Bismarck for official protection for a station that he planned to build in Southwest Africa. Bismarck, who

believed that German colonization should be done by private entrepreneurs rather than by the German government, granted this request. After this station was built, the German colonization of this region proceeded rapidly as a succession of treaties were made with local chiefs, allowing Germans to occupy and exploit tribal lands.

In 1885, the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft fur Sudwest-Afrika (German Colonial Society for Southwest Africa) was founded with the support of German bankers. The new company soon obtained exclusive mining rights to the deposits located in the territory. In the years that followed, deposits of gold, copper, platinum, diamonds and other minerals were discovered there, making it the most valuable of all of Germany's overseas possessions. The lure of this colony's mineral wealth and arable land drew many thousands of Germans there, more than Germany's other colonies.

While there were substantial numbers of Germans living in German Southwest Africa, they were greatly out-numbered by indigenous people. Efforts to dispossess the natives of their land for exploitation by Germans resulted in violent clashes, causing the German government to repeatedly send troops in to protect the colonists. This situation, which was similar to that of German East Africa, resulted in German Southwest Africa being taken over by the German government in 1890.

During the First World War, German Southwest Africa became an area of military activity when South African troops (under the British Empire) invaded the colony in September 1914. As the number of these invading troops swelled to nearly 50,000, the British blockade of Germany prevented her from coming to the aid of her colonies. In German Southwest Africa, the *schutztruppe*, and the Afrikaner volunteers who came over to fight alongside them, held out as long as they could against a larger enemy force that was intent on seizing the colony. Caught in a hopeless situation, the last commander of the colony's *schutztruppe* surrendered to South African troops on July 9, 1915.

German Army's Camel Corps in German Southwest Africa.

After the war ended, German Southwest Africa—now called simply "Southwest Africa"—was declared a British protectorate by the League of Nations. Administration of this territory was given over to South Africa, which continued to bear this responsibility until 1990, when the territory became an independent country that called itself the Republic of Namibia.

German Southwest Africa never issued any coins, and the only paper money it issued are very scarce necessity notes which appeared during World War I. So described here are two medals related to this territory.

First is a German military campaign badge that has a sad and bloody history. It was given to a soldier who had taken part in the suppression of a major native uprising in German Southwest Africa. This conflict, which began in 1904, became known as the Herero Wars--named after the Herero people, one of the three indigenous nations living within the colony who that year rose up against the Germans. To aid the colony's Schutztruppe in putting down this uprising, the German government, in 1904, shipped in 14,000 troops. After defeating the rebels in a series of battles, German troops pursued the survivors into the desert, where many of them died of thirst. The Germans then took up position at every water source in a wide area of the desert. These troops had orders to shoot every adult Herero male they saw. Only a few members of the tribe escaped into neighboring British territories. And so, when this conflict ended in 1908, the Herero, a people who numbered around 80,000 before the uprising began, were nearly wiped out in what Germany in 2021 admitted was genocide.

The campaign medal shows on its obverse the head of a female warrior wearing a winged helmet, facing left, who personifies Germany. Around her image is the inscription SUDWEST AFRICA 1904-06. On the reverse of the piece is a cypher of Kaiser Wilhelm II that is topped by an Imperial German crown. Below the cypher is a pair of crossed swords, indicating that the recipient of this medal was a combatant in the Herero Wars. There is an inscription on the reverse that says DEN SIEGREICHEN STREITERN (To the victorious fighters).

The small, silver plaque shown at left, in contrast to the campaign medal, makes reference to a peaceful, public event that was held in German Southwest Africa just two months before the outbreak of World War I. On one side is a scene with indigenous wildlife. Standing on the left is an antelope with spiraling horns known as a kudu. In the middle of the scene, standing on its hind legs, is a small, furry mongoose called a meerkat. The large bird standing at the right is an ostrich. Behind the ostrich is the sun coming up over mountains, and an Imperial German crown rests above. At the bottom of the obverse is the one-word inscription EHRENPREIS ("Honor Prize").

The reverse of the plaque carries a seven-line inscription that tells of a provincial exhibition being held under the protection of His Highness, the Crown Prince, in Windhoek, Southwest Africa, between May 29 and June 1, 1914. Windhoek, it will be noted here, was the capital of this German colony. [Part two will cover Germany's Asian colonies in the next issue.]

At the World's Fair of Money, the American Numismatic Association awarded the Baltimore Coin Club (BCC) a glass plaque celebrating ninety years of continuous membership. The BCC joined ANA the same year (1935) that it was founded, even before it was officially incorporated.

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[Editor's Note: This is the eighth in a series of articles profiling the various member clubs of MSNA.]

MEMBER CLUB PROFILE
OAK CREST COIN HUSKERS

Donald Curtis organized the Oak Crest Coin Club, located in Parkville, Maryland at the Oak Crest Senior Living Community, holding their first meeting on May 9, 2017. The club is made up of some other Oak Crest residents that belonged to other coin clubs, including Joe Adams, Bill Stratemeyer, Charlie Jednorski, and other residents of Oak Crest that are interested in the history of coins. It is an unstructured club, without officers, dues, or auctions like other coin clubs. They just meet once a month in the Village Square Classroom to share information and coin stories. They hold a Show and Tell, and some short presentations, and give out for free older copies of coin papers, magazines, and club journals to whoever wanted them. By December 2017, they had 12 regular members attending meetings.

Similarly, back in 1960, a small group of collectors started gathering in someone's home, and by 1962, they had formed the Harford Coin Huskers. The HCH was mostly a social group, with informal meetings and an annual picnic, though they were one of MSNA's founding clubs. In early 2019, some of the Oak Crest members who were also members of the Harford Coin Huskers suggested that the two clubs merge and meet at Oak Crest. Both clubs voted favorably, and on May 14, 2019, the two clubs merged and changed the name to Oak Crest Coin Huskers. At that time, they elected a slate of officers, Don Curtis as President, Ken Finkenbinder as Vice President, Tracy Ibberson as Secretary, and Bill Stratemeyer as Treasurer. Charles Jednorski was Educational Director and Fred Cook was Auctioneer. At their first meeting, they had 20 members on their roster. The club opened a checking account with monies provided by the Harford Coin Huskers club. Each club member would take turns paying for refreshments at each meeting. The club also began collecting annual dues and holding auctions each month. The club set up a table at the Oak Crest Activities exposition to attract other residents to join the club. At our second meeting, they had a total of 27 members on the club roster.

In March, 2020 when COVID hit, all club activities at Oak Crest were suspended. By January 2021, Oak Crest clubs were again able to meet in person. By that time, they had dropped to 20 members. They began collecting club dues at $25/year for all those under the age 80 and $12.50 for those 80 and above. The money collected pays for refreshments. A prize committee was set up, and each month a member of the Committee would provide two door prizes with a total value of $20-$30. The club would sell tickets for the door prizes. The club also instituted a Special Project drawing with each member eligible to win at each meeting. When one member gets three legs, they receive a proof silver Eagle.

Today the club is thriving and meets on the second Tuesday of the month in the Crestview classroom, with the same slate of officers. A monthly club flyer is posted in the three Oak Crest communities and advertised on the Oak Crest local TV station. Earlier this year, the club and a few members joined the Maryland State Numismatic Association.

Welcome New Members

864 Brian Suddeth
865 Greg Drake
866 Thomas Rego
867 Thomas Turets
868 David King

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PAN COIN SHOW 2026

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The Other Trade Dollars

by Mark Benvenuto, MSNA #R-825

The international silver coin of choice in the Far East was the Mexican 8 reales or peso, minted 1772 to 1914 of 27.07 grams of .903 fine silver (ASW 0.786). Plenty of us in the collecting community are aware that the United States made a serious attempt at producing trade dollars from 1873 to 1878, and that there were a limited number of proofs made for several years after that. At ASW 0.7876, these big silver dollars were heavier than the ASW 0.7734 weight of our domestic silver dollars. The idea was to make a big silver coin that could be used outside our borders, specifically in the Chinese Empire, as a way to facilitate trade and to help American silver mines find a ready market. Yes, trade dollars were originally legal tender within the U.S. as well, but that was not their original reason for being, and aficionados of the series are also aware that the coin was demonetized in 1876 since the price of silver was falling fast, causing many to be recalled and melted, and that the standard reference books are not necessarily great guides for the scarcity of any particular piece today. But the U.S. was not the only nation to try to see if a trade dollar would fly in the Orient. Japan, France, and Great Britain also minted them. And oddly, the British trade dollar lasted significantly longer than the U.S. one.

The British issued a silver dollar only briefly for Hong Kong (1866-8), using a weight of .900 fine 27 grams. At the request of Hong Kong merchants, Britain introduced the trade dollar in 1895 at approximately the same dimensions, .900 fine 26.96 grams (ASW 0.78), just shy of the Mexican dollars which were becoming scarce in Asia. A collector might wonder why this succeeded where the U.S. trade dollar had flopped almost two decades before. One very straightforward answer is the British influence in China through Hong Kong. Britain had won the city after the First Opium War back in 1841. As a colony, it was expanded quite a bit

in 1898. British coinage might have been used in the city, but the British started minting copper and silver coins for Hong Kong in 1863. So it was probably fertile ground for a coin that had a 39mm diameter and its denomination written in Chinese 壹圓 *yi yuan*, as well as Malay ساتو رڠڬيه *satu ringkit*. Plus, large mintages right at the outset couldn't have hurt.

Since the British trade dollar was first issued in 1895, we have a series that spans a century boundary. The 1895 issue came roaring out of the gate with just over 3.3 million minted, so we have a pretty common coin with which to start any collection. Most of the dates within this series can be considered common, as a mintage total of at least one million for any particular year makes a coin from any nation common among collectors today. The 37.4 million coined in 1911 are probably the top of the hill, as it were, when it comes to common British trade dollars.

As might be expected, a huge number of the British trade dollars were coined at the British Royal Mint in London. But curiously, for the person who really wants to dig into this series, there are mint marks, B for Bombay (now Mumbai), and C for Calcutta (now Kolkata). Perhaps the easiest mint mark to miss is the 'B' of Bombay, since it is buried in the tines of the trident that the allegorical figure of Britannia holds in her right hand. You might need a magnifying glass to see it. But there are also quite a few handsome looking specimens that have been slabbed by some reputable, third-party grading services, usually with a title like: "PCGS 1898-B British Trade Dollar." The mint mark in Calcutta is perhaps easier to identify, as the 'C' is located between the foot of Britannia and the bottom of the shield she holds in her left hand. If you are like many collectors, though, the mint marks are probably a neat item of note, but not something to stop you from assembling a date run.

The British trade dollars were made for both Hong Kong and what were then called the Straits Settlements (which later became Singapore and much of Malaysia). Eventually though, Britain produced Straits Settlements dollars, making the trade dollar more common around Hong Kong.

One possibly strange feature that can be found on some of the trade dollars is what appears to be a punch, or more than one punch, into the coin. Called a chop mark, these were identifiers used by Chinese financial institutions that verified someone had examined the piece, and found it to be good silver. Something like a "thumbs up" in metal, as it were. Chop marks – also called chops – are sometimes found on Spanish 8 reales, Mexican pesos, and United States trade dollars as well.

For someone looking to build a collection of British trade dollars today, the obvious question is what to pay for them. As a point of reference, these big guys have 0.78 ounces of the precious metal in them (that's 24.255 grams), which at $40 per Troy ounce equals $31.20. If you can get your hands on them for less, you are getting an amazing deal.

It doesn't take too much to figure out that mint state specimens will cost considerably more, and that even a significantly worn piece will probably run about $50. As for the presence of the just-mentioned chop marks, well, many collectors will claim that ought to make a coin cost less, because the coin is damaged. Some folks, on the other hand, may opt to pay more, simply because this is proof that the coin made it to the Far East and was used there. However you choose to collect British trade dollars today though, they can become an interesting part of our hobby, one that is rich with world history.

PAN Exhibit Results

At the May PAN show, MSNA Editor and Treasurer Simcha Kuritzky (center) won first place in the World Coins class with *Collecting Israel's Commemorative Coins by Series*, and *A Zionist So-Called Dollar* won second place in the Tokens & Medals class.

VNA Exhibit Results

At the September VNA show, MSNA Editor and Treasurer Simcha Kuritzky (right) won first place for his *Isle of Man Cat Bullion Coins* exhibit. This is the first time this exhibit has been shown.

MSNA life member Michael Shutterly (right) won second place for his exhibit *Tragic Dynasty: The Heraclians of Byzantium*, and second place People's Choice for *24 Centuries of the Denarius*.

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ANA Show Results

The American Numismatic Association (ANA) held the World's Fair of Money for the first time in August in Oklahoma City, capital of Oklahoma.

MSNA life member Michael Shutterly (right) won Best of Show and second runner-up awards for his exhibits *Tragic Dynasty: The Heraclians of Byzantium* and *24 Centuries of the Denarius*. He also won first place in the Fitts Literary Award for Ancient & Medieval Coinage Studies for his article *Medieval Salutes to Mary.*

MSNA Editor and Treasurer Simcha Kuritzky (right) had four exhibits. *Collecting Israel's Commemorative Coins by Series* won first place in Modern Coins and Medals class, *Israel Coin Designs* won first place in Middle Eastern, *Vermont's Catamount* won first in U.S. Commemorative Coinage, and *A Zionist So-Called Dollar* won third place in the Single Case class.

MSNA Honorary Life Member David Schenkman (center) won the Numismatic Literary Guild's award for Best Tokens & Medals Article for *Entertainment in 19th Century America*, the Andersen Memorial Journalism award, First Place Heath Literary Award for *Take Me out to the Ball Game*, and the Catherine Sheehan Literary Award for Paper Money for *Building Canals with Paper*.

Local News

The **Maryland State Numismatic Association** will hold their annual meeting at the Whitman Expo on Friday, Nov. 7 at 3:00 PM in room 301.

MSNA President **Ken Swab** gave the presentation "Civil War (and Other) Brewery Tokens" at the **Catonsville Coin Club** meeting on August 13. The presentation focused on tokens of the Civil War, when small change largely disappeared from circulation, to be replaced by privately issued tokens. Among the many merchants who issued tokens were a dozen breweries in five states, as well as about ten saloons. The talk also touched on several 20th century token-issuing Baltimore and DC breweries.

In July, the **Montgomery County Coin Club** Treasurer **Simcha Kuritzky** gave a talk on Monetizing the Bible: Israel's Biblical Art Coin Series. This is Israel's third-longest commemorative coin series, which started in 1994 and still going. The September meeting included reviews of the ANA convention in Oklahoma City by MSNA members Simcha Kuritzky and **Gerald Grzenda**.

The **Washington Numismatic Society** voted to move their meeting night from the third to the first Tuesday of the month, except they are swapping nights with the Montgomery County Coin Club in November since the venue MCCC uses will be closed for Veterans' Day on the second Tuesday. In September, President **Simcha Kuritzky** spoke on the Isle of Man cat bullion coins. The October meeting will host MSNA President **Ken Swab** who will talk on brewery tokens.

Coin Club Meeting Calendar (most months)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
First		Washington Numis. Soc.		Baltimore
Second	Cambridge, Colonial	Montgomery, Oak Crest, W. Maryland	Bowie, Catonsville	
Third				Baltimore
Fourth	Carroll County			

What's Your Sign?

Part Sixty-One: Moslem Figural Coins

by Simcha Kuritzky, NLG

When most collectors think of medieval Islamic coins, they think of coins that are all inscription with no designs, like the plentiful Abbasid dirhem. Islam strictly prohibits imagery in religious contexts, and it was believed many of the early coiners had produced idols before the advent of Islam, so by the late Seventh Century CE (starting 74 AH), most coins bore inscriptions and perhaps fancy borders. This parallels the earlier example of Jewish coins from the Hasmonean and Herodian dynasties (165 BCE-70CE) which would portray inscriptions and plants, but not people or animals. However, with the conversion of Turkic peoples to Islam, and greater trade with other cultures that started with the Crusades, many Islamic rulers decided that depicting figures on coins was not idolatry, and many of these figures were based on Greco-Roman coins. Astrologic figures were commonly portrayed, both planets and zodiac signs. The attributions here are from Spengler & Sayles, *Turkoman Figural Bronze Coins and Their Iconography*.

Sun Moon Mars Jupiter

The first set show human figures representing the planets. First is the sun, represented by the Greek god Helios. This appears on a mid-size (25mm) bronze coin of Nasir ad-Din Artuq Arslan dated 611 AH (1214 CE). Next is the moon, shown as a crowned Turkish woman holding a crescent pointed up, on a 30mm bronze coin of Izz ad-Din Masud I dated 585 AH (1189 CE). Third is Mars, shown as a cross-legged warrior in helm and chain mail, holding a sword in his right hand and a severed head in his left. This 30mm coin was minted by Husam ad-Din Yuluq Arslan in 596 AH (1200 CE). Last is Jupiter, represented as a man seated cross-legged on a platform, holding a pomegranate, with stars to either side. This was minted on a 30mm bronze coin by Nasir ad-Din Artuq Arslan in 628 AH (1231 CE).

Venus

Sun & Mercury

Alchemical Mercury

Venus stares straight forward on this 28mm bronze of Fakhr ad-Din Qara Arslan dated 570 AH (1174 CE), photo courtesy of Nomos AG. She is identified by the tiny winged figure with bow attending her, obviously Cupid who was Venus' son. Sometimes the coins commemorate an actual astrological event. This 33mm bronze coin of Qutb ad-Din Il-Ghazi II dated 580 AH (1184 CE) shows two diademed male busts facing forward. The larger one with spiky hair represents the sun and the smaller one with tiny wings on his hat represents Mercury. It commemorates a very visible transit of Mercury across the sun in 1181 CE. Mercury is also represented by a double-headed eagle on this 24mm bronze coin of Imad ad-Din Zengi II of 581-592 AH (1185-96 CE). Mercury, being the quickest planet, lent its name to quicksilver, a metal that is liquid at room temperature. Medieval alchemists believed that mercury was needed for transmutation, symbolized by the double-headed eagle which represented the before and after versions of the item transmuted. Missing from this group of six planet-related coins is Saturn, the slowest moving of the planets and hence considered to be ill fortune.

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Gemini heads Virgo head

Only four of the twelve zodiac signs appear on Islamic coins, although other artwork, especially inlaid bowls and pen boxes, do show all signs. The two signs ruled by Mercury appear quite often. At left is Gemini, represented by twin heads, on a 32mm bronze dirham of Nejm ad-din Alpi Artuq issued 560-572 AH (1165-77 CE), and third in the sequence is the reverse of the same coin portraying Virgo with braided hair. Gemini is in Mercury's day house, and Virgo in its night house.

Leo Sagittarius

The next two signs were also shown in the last column on banknotes. The second coin shows the sun with a face behind Leo walking right. These commonly appear on Persian coins, and this piece is a copper fals from Khoy dated 1189 AH (1775 CE). The last is a 32mm bronze coin of Nasir ad-Din Artuq Arslan dated 599 AH (1203 CE) portraying a centaur (crowned man's trunk on a leopard's body) aiming an arrow at his tail which takes the form of a dragon. The dragon's tail is a name astrologers used for where the moon sets, and it rests on the edge of Sagittarius. It is significant because if the moon is full when it reaches the dragon's tail, there will be a lunar eclipse, and if it is new, there will be a solar eclipse.

These coins are not easy to find, but since so few people collect them, they can be quite cheap. Worn pieces can be found for $10-50, and even nice examples go for as little as $200. I was introduced to these coins by Bill Spengler himself at an ANA convention back in the 1990s where he exhibited the coins photographed for his book.

MARYLAND STATE NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
March 5 – 7, 2026

At: Baltimore Convention Center
One West Pratt St., Baltimore, Maryland

EXHIBIT RULES

1. Exhibit applications should be received no later than February 1, 2026. Applications received after that date will be accepted only if space and cases are available.
2. All exhibits are to be in place by 11:00 A.M. on Friday, March 6, 2026 and are not to be removed without permission of the Exhibit Chairman prior to 1:00 P.M. on Saturday, March 7, 2026.
3. It is understood that your exhibit case(s) will be opened **ONLY** in your presence.
4. All keys are to be retained by the Exhibit Chairman or their proxy.
5. All materials in a display must be the exclusive property of the exhibitor.
6. Any material in a display which is not genuine must be so identified.
7. The name or identity of exhibitors shall not appear on exhibits.
8. No exhibit shall contain advertising for items that are for sale.
9. The right is reserved to restrict material outside of the exhibit case(s), which might distract attention from other exhibits.
10. The maximum number of cases per single exhibit is six (6). If more than one exhibit is entered by a single exhibitor, there will be a maximum of ten (10) cases total.
11. Exhibits must not have won an award from MSNA previously.
12. The awards will include a Best of Show Award, Master (second place) and Superior (third). Appreciation awards will be given to all other exhibitors. Collectors may enter more than one exhibit, but <u>will be entitled to receive only ONE award</u>.

EXHIBIT SET-UP HOURS

Thursday	March 5, 2026	10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.
Friday	March 6, 2026	9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.

EXHIBITS MAY BE REMOVED AFTER 1 PM ON SATURDAY

EXHIBIT AGREEMENT

This agreement made and entered into this _____ day of _____ 202__ by the **MARYLAND STATE NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION, INC., Baltimore Convention Center, and Whitman Coin & Collectibles Expo LLC,** hereinafter referred to as party of the first part; and _____ hereinafter referred to as party of the second part.

WITNESSETH: That for and in consideration of the opportunity to exhibit numismatic material which may consist of, but shall not be limited to, coins, tokens, medals, paper currency, and to compete against other exhibits for awards, the said parties mutually agree as follows:

I. That the party of the first part will provide security guards for the Bourse and Exhibit areas during the period of the show, and the presence of the security guards is provided as a convenience only and is not intended to be an expressed or implied warranty of guarantee against any loss or injury whatsoever.

II. That the party of the second part hereby remits, releases and forever discharges the party of the first part, its officers, committees, member clubs, host clubs, members and employees either in their official corporate capacity, or in their individual or personnel capacity of and from all manner of actions, causes of actions, suits, proceedings, debts, contracts, judgments, damages, claims, and any loss, theft or damage of any kind which may occur to its possessions and exhibits howsoever sustained either directly or indirectly in connection with said convention and show including but not limited to the Bourse-Exhibit area or other convention space, and the street area near the Baltimore Convention Center and that the party of the first part, its officers, committees, club members, host clubs, or employees, may plead this release in bar of any claim demand, or cause of action instituted by the party of the second part.

III. That the party of the second part does, by this instrument, covenant with the said party of the first part to forever refrain from instituting or in any way aiding any claim, demand, action or cause of action, for damages, as a result of any loss or theft to the party of the second part during the said convention and show.

AS WITNESS the following signatures and seals this _____ day of _____, 202__.

MARYLAND STATE NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

BY: _____ (MSNA Official)
Party of the first part

BY: _____ (Exhibitor)
Party of the Second part

BY: _____
Guardian if Exhibitor is under 18 years of age.

MARYLAND STATE NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
March 5 – 7, 2026
Baltimore Convention Center
One West Pratt St.
Baltimore, Maryland

EXHIBITOR: (please print) Date: _____

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CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

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MEDALS	_____	ANCIENT COINS	_____
TOKENS	_____	GOLD	_____

OTHER (Please specify) _____

TITLE OF EXHIBIT: _____

NUMBER OF CASES (Maximum of 6):

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_____ I HAVE MY OWN CASES

CASES TO BE FLAT ON TABLE: **HORIZONTAL**_____**VERTICAL** _____
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PO Box 13504
Silver Spring, MD 20911-3504

or email Word, PDF or JPEG copy to
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EXHIBITOR SIGNATURE_____

If exhibitor is under 18 please add
LEGAL GUARDIAN SIGNATURE_____

Ballot

MSNA by-laws require an annual election in which all paid-up members can participate. Please include your name on the envelope and vote for one candidate per office or write in your candidate. As mentioned in the President's Message, we are looking for a new president and vice president. The results will be announced at the MSNA annual meeting at 2:00 PM on Friday, November 7 at the Baltimore Convention Center during the Whitman Expo.

President

☐ Erik Douglas

☐ _____ (write-in)

Vice President

☐ Paul Timmel

☐ _____ (write-in)

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☐ _____ (write-in)

Treasurer

☐ Simcha Kuritzky, CPA

☐ _____ (write-in)

Ballots should be emailed to JoyousLion@gmail.com or physically mailed to be received no later than November 3 to:

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Silver Spring, MD 20911-3504

Maryland State Numismatic Association, Inc.
P. O. Box 13504
Silver Spring, MD 20911-3504

Dedicated to attaining knowledge and fulfillment in Numismatics

Membership Application/Renewal

Date: _____ MSNA #:_____ (for renewal)

I hereby apply for membership/renewal in the Maryland State Numismatic Association, Inc., subject to its constitution & by-laws. (Please Print)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS:_____

CITY: _____STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

E-Mail: _____

☐ Tax-deductible donation to MSNA $ _____
If ANA member, please give us the ANA Number _____

The items below are only requested for original membership application:

Numismatic specialties: _____

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Other Numismatic Affiliations: _____

Signature: _____

Sponsor No. 1: _____

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For junior membership please include:

Guardian Signature: _____ Birth Year: _____

Fee of $15 (club), $10 (individual) or $2 (under 18) must accompany this form for calendar year dues ($5 individual after August 1). Life member upgrades are: $300 for clubs, $200 (age 50 & under), $125 (51-65), $75 (66 & over). You must be a regular member for 3 years before attaining life membership. Pay by check or money order.

Maryland Coin Show Dates

All shows have free admission. Only the Whitman show does not have free parking.

26 Oct. – Hunt Valley Coin and Currency Show, Embassy Suites, 213 International Circle, Hunt Valley, MD; 9-4. (410) 929-8178

1 Nov. – **Carroll County Coin Club Show**, Best Western Conference Center, 451 WMC Drive (at Route 140), Westminster, MD; 9:30-5.

6-8 Nov. – Whitman Baltimore Winter Expo, Baltimore Convention Center, 1 West Pratt Street; Thu 2-6, Fri-Sat 10-6, Sun. 10-3. MSNA will hold its annual meeting at this show.

8 Nov. - **Western Maryland Coin Club Show**, Cumberland Outdoor Club, Floor 2, 31 Thomas St, Cumberland, MD; Sat. 9-4; (410) 978-9628

15 Nov. – Cambridge Coin Show, American Legion Post 91, 98 Sunburst Highway (Route 50), Cambridge, MD; 11-5. (443) 515-0311

6 Dec. – Baltimore Stamp & Coin Show, Maryland State Fair Grounds, Mosner Miller Bldg., 2200 York Road, Timonium, MD; 9-4.

7 Dec. – Hunt Valley Coin and Currency Show, Embassy Suites, 213 International Circle, Hunt Valley, MD; 9-4. (410) 929-8178

2026

5-7 Mar. – Whitman Baltimore Spring Expo, Baltimore Convention Center, 1 West Pratt Street; Thu 2-6, Fri-Sat 10-6, Sun. 10-3. MSNA will hold its annual exhibit competition at this show.

14 Mar. – Cambridge Coin Show, American Legion Post 91, 98 Sunburst Highway (Route 50), Cambridge, MD; 11-5. (443) 515-0311

Northern Virginia Coin Show Dates

1-2 Nov. – Vienna Coin & Stamp Show, Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna, VA; Sat 10-6, Sun. 10-4.

13-14 Dec. – Annandale Coin Show, Nova Community College, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA; Sat 10-5, Sun. 10-4.

2026

31 Jan. - 1 Feb. – Vienna Coin & Stamp Show, Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna, VA; Sat 10-6, Sun. 10-4.

MEMBER CLUBS IN GOOD STANDING (* denotes charter)

Baltimore Coin Club * P. O. Box 43681 Baltimore, MD 21236 (410) 284-8382 www.baltimorecoinclub.com	Bowie Coin Club P. O. Box 913 Bowie, MD 20718-0913 bowiecoinclub.org stee99@gmail.com
Catonsville Coin Club 517 N Chapel Gate Lane Baltimore, MD 21229 PMTimmel@verizon.net	Colonial Coin Club * 3015 Love Point Road Stevensville, MD 21666 bettymeck@aol.com
Carroll County Coin Club* % Lester A. White 10 West Main Street Westminster, MD 21157 Les.white.1@juno.com	Maryland Token & Medal Society P. O. Box 28253 Parkville, MD 21234 mdtams.org leonard_cicero47@verizon.net
Montgomery County Coin Club P. O. Box13504 Silver Spring, MD 20911 mococoinclub@gmail.com	Oak Crest Coin Huskers % Donald Curtis 8810 Walther Blvd, Apt 2229 Parkville, MD 21234 DonaldLeoCurtis@gmail.com
Pennsylvania Association of Numismatists 1985 Lincoln Way Suite 23 #225 White Oak, PA 15131 www.pancoins.org	South Glen Burnie Coin Club % Darrel King 8017 Clark Station Road Severn, MD 21144 sgbcc.com
Washington Numismatic Society P. O. Box 13504 Silver Spring, MD 20911 wns.anaclubs.org JoyousLion@gmail.com	Western Maryland Coin Club* 100 Baltimore Street Cumberland, MD 21502

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1/4 Page @	$10.00	$18.00	$27.00
1/8 Page @	$ 6.00	$10.00	$15.00

Issue Dates and Approximate Deadlines for 2026:

	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Content due:	January 15	May 1	October 1
In Mail:	February 15	June 1	November 1

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